

REMARKS

A. Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 13 and 15-18 remain pending in this application and claims 1, 2, 4, 8-10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 are amended by this paper. These amendments are made for the purposes of: (i) specifically reciting that multiple barcodes are generated for documents comprising multiple pages i.e. one barcode per page of such multiple pages; and (ii) improving upon language in the claims, in particular, to consistently use terms therein. No new matter is added by these amendments which find support throughout the application and drawings as filed.

B. Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner's comments are noted with respect to the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed 26 [sic] March 2003. Regarding the filing date of record for said Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, applicant states that it includes a U.S. mail certificate dated 21 March 2003 and, therefore, should be assigned of record a filing date of 21 March, 2003 (not 26 March, 2003). Regarding the foreign reference International Application No. PCT/DE00/02606 (Kim et al.) cited therein, being in the German language, applicant advises that said PCT reference is not pertinent to the claimed subject matter (invention). Rather, it may be relevant only to applicant's disclosure. Said reference discloses a method for incorporating a secret key of a digital signature into a set of bit map data for a digital image of a document and refers to one (only) bar code covering the whole of the document (all pages together), all of which is very different from applicant's claimed invention. Said reference was filed for completeness, since it was cited in the International Search Report that issued for applicant's corresponding International (PCT) application and not by reason that it was thought to be pertinent.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections by the Examiner having regard to the following submissions.

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C. 35 USC §103

The Examiner has indicated that claims 1-5 and 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. patent No. 5,606,609 ("Houser et al.") in view of U.S. published patent application No. 2002/0188845 ("Henderson et al.") and U.S. published patent application No. 2002/0007335 ("Millard et al."). Further, the Examiner has indicated that claims 6-9 and 15-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Houser et al. and Henderson et al., and further in view of Adobe Acrobat 3.0 Tutorial ("Adobe").

Contrary to the cited references, Applicant's amended claims require multiple barcodes, one for each page of a document comprising multiple pages. More specifically, independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to recite that "multiple said unique barcodes are generated where said electronic document comprises multiple pages, with one unique barcode being generated for and associated with each page of said multiple pages". Further, each said independent claim requires that each said barcode is generated (in part) on the basis of validated user-input variable data, which means that the barcode generated for, and applied to, each individual page also serves to signal that the user-input data for that page has already been verified. As such, applicant's invention protects not simply the document as a whole (the sum resulting from the individual pages) but also each individual page, after that page's user-input data has been validated, which improves the level of security afforded to the document as compared with the cited references. By contrast, the cited references teach away from applicant's added page-by-page protection because they all, unanimously, only teach the reader to protect the document as a whole (their barcodes define only the whole of a document).

Applicant traverses the Examiner's rejection of the claims, on grounds of alleged obviousness, and submits that Houser et al. and Henderson et al. and/or Millard et al. and/or Adobe do not disclose, teach or even suggest applicant's invention whether viewed alone or in combination. As previously stated, there is no motivation to modify these

references to provide the foregoing page-by-page unique barcode feature of applicant's amended independent claims 1 and 10 herein. None of the cited references makes any suggestion to do so but, in fact, teaches away from doing so by teaching that the document as a whole, only, is the target to be protected.

Houser et al. embeds into an electronic document a security object comprising confidential information, at a user's request, to effect that user's approval of the document. The objective is to provide means for users to approve a document in a relatively secure manner before sending it to others over the Internet in such manner that recipients of the documents may confirm that user's approval and the document so approved. However, it is the document as whole which Houser et al. authenticates, and each individual page is not itself (separately) authenticated by Houser et al. Nor is this feature of applicant's claims contemplated or suggested in any way. Although the Examiner refers to the statement in Houser et al. that "multiple security objects may be embedded in a single electronic document" (Col. 7, lines 60-65) there is nothing in this statement to suggest that each separate page of a document be protected with an embedded security object and, to the contrary, the referenced statement of Houser et al. refers to a "single electronic document" which considers the document as a whole (only). Nor is there any suggestion in Houser to validate the user-input data before generating, for each page, a barcode unique to that page.

Likewise, Henderson et al. validate value-bearing documents as a whole by creating an encryption message for each document, whereby the document as a whole is encrypted with multiple security keys. Henderson et al. do not suggest or address, in any manner, any step directed to an individual page of such document (indeed, Henderson et al. does not contemplate any value-bearing document having multiple pages). Henderson et al. disclose the use of a barcode for purposes only of providing the encryption message in a compatible electronic format in certain situation but there is no suggestion that a barcode is printed, or otherwise used, to provide applicant's page-by-page barcode feature.

Nor is there any suggestion in Millard et al. for applicant's page-by-page barcode feature for providing individual page protection in addition to whole document protection. Millard et al. is not directed to the subject of authenticating or protecting documents but, rather, to securing electronic financial transactions at the time they are made over an electronic network. As stated by the Examiner, Millard et al. disclose validating user-input data, by determining whether such input data is within the bounds of predetermined permissible data, but they do so in the context of an exchange of network communications, not any document such as applicants' that is intended for manual handling by printing, hand-signing and faxing. There is no suggestion or motivation to combine applicants' validating of user-input data and then protecting each page of a document by means of a barcode unique to that page, based (in part) on that validated user-input data. Applicants' said claim features provide protection directed to the intended manual handling option for the documents covered by the claims (e.g. hand-signing, hand-faxing). Moreover, the combination of applicants' claim features for validating user-input data and page-by-page barcoding is new and non-obvious over each and all of Millard et al., Houser et al. and Henderson et al.

By reason of the foregoing it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner cannot be satisfied, as the law would require to maintain the 35 USC 103(a) rejection, that either Houser et al. or Henderson et al. (whether with or without knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art) provide any suggestion or motivation to modify either such reference so as to produce applicant's page-by-page multiple unique barcodes with validated user-input data; and, moreover, neither Houser et al. nor Henderson et al. teaches or suggests this feature of applicant's claims so the cited references together do not teach every limitation of applicant's independent claims 1 and 10.

Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims, as amended herein, patentably distinguish over the prior art and are in good form for allowance. Applicant notes that if independent claims 1 and 10 are non-obvious under 35 USC 103 then any claim depending therefrom is non-obvious.

CONCLUSIONS

For all the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims, as amended herein, are in good order and ready for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections raised in the first Office Action is respectfully requested. In the event that the Examiner cannot allow the present application for any reason, the Examiner is encouraged to contact applicant's attorney to discuss resolution of any remaining issues.

Dated this 3rd day of August, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,
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